



**Testimony
Elizabeth Gara
Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA)
Before the
Environment Committee
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The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) urges lawmakers to amend **HB-5526, AN ACT CONCERNING COMMERCIAL OR RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS ON PROPERTY THAT CONTAINS CERTAIN WOODLANDS**, to ensure that the bill does not interfere with certain water company activities that are critical to providing customers with a safe, adequate supply of quality water.

As drafted, the bill would require a state permit prior to the construction of a commercial or residential development project on certain woodlands. Water companies engage in numerous commercial construction projects on watershed lands, which are critical to protecting the state's public water supplies and maintaining open space lands. These activities, which include installing and maintaining dams, wells, treatment and pumping facilities, water transmission and distribution mains, and access roads, are essential to a water company's ability to provide a pure and adequate water supply to its customers.

However, under the bill, water companies would have to obtain a state issued permit prior to construction of any of these projects. The vast majority of these activities already require the issuance of various permits or approvals from a myriad of local, state and federal agencies. Moreover, many of these activities are required by state or federal law to ensure the quality and purity of drinking water supplies. Therefore, the additional permit and review process called for in the bill would be unnecessary and duplicative as it relates to water company construction activities.

We therefore recommend that the bill be amended to exempt watershed lands owned by water companies as well as watershed lands owned by other entities from the scope of the bill.

The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWWA) is an association of public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut. Membership in the Association is open to all Connecticut water utilities: investor-owned, municipal and regional authorities. CWWA is committed to working with the state to develop policies that will ensure that Connecticut has a safe, ample supply of water to meet present and future needs.